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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-first year

Identical letters dated 20 February 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Yesterday, 19 February 2006, the cabinet of Ehud Olmert, acting prime minister of Israel, adopted the unilateral measure of freezing the transfer of funds belonging to the Palestinian people held hostage to its 38-year old occupation. These funds, amounting to 50 million United States dollars, are collected by Israel, the occupying Power, in customs and tax receipts on behalf of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) under an economic protocol signed between the two sides in 1994 in Paris. This dangerous decision by the Israeli Government came about a day after the swearing in of a new Palestinian parliament, which the Palestinian people proudly elected in a free and fair democratic election on 25 January 2006.

The unilateral decision taken by the Israeli Government to withhold money belonging to the PNA is not only condemnable but will have devastating consequences throughout the region. The Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, already suffer from a dire humanitarian situation as a result of Israel's illegal measures and actions, including the severest restrictions of movement, and they must not be further alienated, oppressed and punished for merely demonstrating their commitment to democracy. President Mahmoud Abbas stressed in a press conference held in Ramallah yesterday, the PNA's rejection of unilateral solutions asserting that the Israeli Government and the entire world "should respect the democratic choice of the Palestinian people, who should not be punished for this".

Reprimanding the Palestinian people for having exercised their democratic rights in exactly the manner the international community had called upon them to do will only deliver a contradictory message and have negative consequences on the promotion and establishment of democratic ideals and principles in the region. It must be stated that the will of the Palestinian people can never be broken and they will never succumb to the forces of oppression, violence, cruelty and injustice.

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The Palestinian leadership calls on the international community, including the Quartet, and in particular the United Nations, to exert maximum pressure on Israel, the occupying Power, to rescind its decision to withhold funds that belong to the PNA. The occupying Power must not be allowed to go against the will of the international community and punish the Palestinian people for exercising their democratic right to elect their representatives. We express our strongest hopes that the necessary measures will be taken in this regard.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council and the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations